

Sept. 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

included protection for the free exercise of religion in the very first Amendment. This Act recognizes the importance the free exercise of religion plays in our democratic society.

I also want to thank the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion and the civil rights community for the central role they played in crafting this legislation. Their work in passing this legislation once again demonstrates that

people of all political beliefs and faiths can work together for a common purpose that benefits all Americans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 22, 2000.

NOTE: S. 2869, approved September 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-274.

Statement on the President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health

September 22, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign an Executive order establishing a new Commission to improve opportunities for tobacco farmers and their communities while continuing to protect public health. This action builds on the longstanding commitment Vice President Gore and I share to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco use and protect individual tobacco farmers. Tobacco growers, like many other farmers, have confronted difficult economic circumstances these last few years as tobacco companies increasingly turn to foreign tobacco. We have supported several efforts over the years to protect tobacco farmers and to develop new opportunities for these growers and their communities. The Commission, which will make recommendations on ways to continue this work while protecting public health, is an important next step.

This new panel, the President's Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production

While Protecting Public Health, will be co-chaired by William Martin "Rod" Kuegel, Jr., the president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, and Matthew Myers, the president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Both are leaders in their communities with proven records on bringing grower and health groups together on issues important to both. In 1998 they worked with a coalition of grower, public health, and religious groups to issue a statement of principles outlining their shared commitment to reducing disease caused by tobacco products and ensuring the future prosperity and stability of American tobacco farmers and farming communities. The work of this important new Commission will serve to further demonstrate that the goals of reducing youth smoking and protecting American farmers can be pursued together.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to UNITA

September 22, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) is to continue in effect beyond September 26, 2000, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on September 26, 1993, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions and policies of UNITA pose a continuing unusual and ex-

traordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 864 (1993), 1127 (1997), 1173 (1998), and 1176 (1998) continue to oblige all member states to maintain sanctions. Discontinuation of the sanctions would have a prejudicial effect on the prospects for peace in Angola. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure on UNITA to reduce its ability to pursue its military operations.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 22, 2000.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and an Exchange With Reporters

September 23, 2000

The President. Good morning. Yesterday I directed the Secretary of Energy to exchange 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve over the next 30 days.

As it stands, overall heating oil inventories are more than 20 percent lower than they were last year, 50 percent lower on the East Coast, more than 60 percent lower in New England. The underlying cause of low inventories is the high price of crude oil.

The overriding purpose for our action is to increase supply and help consumers make it through the cold winter. Families shouldn't have to drain their wallets to drive their cars or heat their homes.

I'd also note that this action will result in more oil in the reserve. This is a swap. And the reserve will be replenished along with a premium, further increasing our long-term protection against energy supply disruptions. This is the right thing to do. It's good energy policy,

good national security policy, and good family policy.

Today I'm announcing new actions to help make sure that heating oil is available and affordable for our families. First, I'm directing the Department of Health and Human Services to release \$400 million in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds, the largest ever emergency funding release of its kind to help families who can least bear the burden of high energy prices this winter.

Second, I'm asking the EPA to help States identify ways to use more and different kinds of home heating oil while minimizing environmental consequences. This could help to further build home heating oil inventories.

Third, I am directing Federal agencies to make early contractual commitments to purchase heating oil throughout the winter so the wholesalers will have the confidence to build inventories in advance.